

A State System of Education for New York.

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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF THE

ROCHESTER UNIVERSITY,

AT

ROCHESTER, N. Y., JULY 11, 1854.

BY HENRY J. RAYMOND.

NEW YORK:

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A D D R E S S .

GENTLEMEN OF THE LITERARY SOCIETIES :

I AM aware that approved custom and the strict proprieties of this occasion, require a discourse in harmony with the scholastic exercises of the day and the purely intellectual tone of college halls. While I am profoundly sensitive to the attractions of such high themes,—while it would delight me beyond measure to select from among your studies,—from classic pages, from the revealings of science, or the deeper mysteries of philosophic speculation,—the topic for the meditations of the hour, I feel that the studies and the labors of my life have not fitted me for the task. If, therefore, I believed that you expected such a discourse from me, I should feel constrained to impeach the judgment which guided your choice. I prefer to suppose that in selecting an orator from the ranks of those engaged in the struggles and the labors of practical life, you designed to indicate a wish for some subject connected with those interests and partaking of that spirit. And for this belief I find confirmation, or at least excuse, in the fact, that your associations are in part composed of those who have joined those ranks already, and that all their members are in training for them; and that when the duties and en-

joyments of this select and sacred hour shall have ended, the services of active life will again claim your thoughts and your exertions.

You are not only Scholars, you are Citizens also ;—citizens mainly of New York,—of a State young, indeed, as history computes the age of states, but already even beyond the *terra antiqua* of VIRGIL, *potens armis atque ubere glebe* ; of a State rich, populous, and powerful beyond the oldest of her sister States ; of a State where industry, energy, and manly freedom have already set their seal, and marked her as capable of empire,—as competent of herself to repeat the best achievements of civil or of martial greatness in ancient or in modern times. I propose to speak to you of this OUR STATE ; not of its material, but of its moral, interests ; not of its Lands, but of its Men ; not of its Canals or its Railroads, but of its Colleges and Schools ; not of its means of growing *rich*, but of its means of growing *great*, of raising up men of lofty spirit and heroic stamp, men who shall perfect its institutions, enlarge and fortify its freedom, fill its hills and valleys with intelligence and virtue, and *thus* carry its fixed and enduring glory down to the remotest generations.

As citizens, we are justly proud of our great State. We are proud of what she has done for herself, and for our larger common country ; of the valor of her children on the field of war ; of the wisdom and the virtue she has sent into our highest councils ; of her intelligent and resolute enterprise in the promotion of commerce, and in the development of her resources. But

as Scholars, we cannot but cherish for her even loftier aims and higher hopes than these. For these are, after all, but the means and instrumentalities whereby States are to attain the true ends of State existence; they are but the steps by which they tread their path to the lofty heights of great renown. The test and measure of a nation's greatness is the character of its People,—the developed and perfected MANHOOD it has produced. All its acts and all its laws are to be judged by their bearing on this great end. Viewed thus in its widest scope, Education is not only one of the leading interests of every government, but it is really and truly the only ultimate aim of state existence. It is the great interest to which all others are subordinate, and which alone gives them value. What are laws, indeed, but means of discipline? Why do we protect life and property, but that both may be used for the advancement and elevation of character? What are the punishments inflicted by Society, but means and agencies of improvement,—parts of the great state system of educational discipline, whereby the character of its citizens is to be perfected? And what is the ultimate object of all our railroads and canals, all our protective and auxiliary legislation, our aids to commerce, to agriculture and manufactures; what do they all seek, in the idea of them, and as the final, crowning consummation of their utility, but the nurture of wise and noble MEN? And how do we test the worth of institutions,—how do we determine whether the policy and historical action of a state is beneficent or not, but by finding what kind of men it will produce, what

spirit it nurtures in them, whether they grow intelligent, liberal, noble-minded under its influence, or whether it belittles their minds, and makes them ignorant, bigoted, and base? And in what but this, can you find any just ground for national pride? That pride which springs from true patriotism—in what should it most exult? What should it most wish to say of its state, but that there Man is educated to be great, and the mass of its people are raised by the power of its policy to the highest level of intelligence and virtue?

And when we think of our own State, and seek for the grounds of that high ambition which we cherish for her, do we not find them in the tendency of her institutions and her policy to develop what is true and just and noble in the character of her people? Do we not, even while we exult in her vast wealth, her great enterprise, her grand achievements for commerce, her magnificent provision for developing the exhaustless resources of her soil,—do we not look *through* all these, to the effect they will have on the spirit and character of the successive generations of her sons? Do we not value them most for the use that may be made of them, in the attainment of the higher and nobler ends of national being? Do we not fasten, with most of exultation and of hope, on that STATE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION she has already inaugurated,—on the perfection and complete development it will yet attain, and the far richer and grander blessings it is destined to confer on the millions of her people, in the present and the future?

The State of New York has at this moment no

higher interest than Education. That, indeed, is the sum and aggregate of all her interests. And you, as among the most favored and instructed of her sons,—you who are soon to carry the culture and the discipline, the large, knowledge and the augmented power which your college career ought to confer, into her service, and to use them for the advancement of her welfare and the promotion of her highest praise,—can find nowhere a nobler or a better field for their exercise, than in the completion and perfection of that Educational System of which the basis is already laid in the organization of our Common Schools. In that organization our State has recognized, as a legitimate function of government, the Education of the People. She has given explicit sanction and authority to the principle that Education is a State interest,—that it is among the fundamental and paramount offices of a State to provide for the instruction of her children, to aid in the development of their faculties, to furnish the means and agencies for bringing out into full activity, all the energy and intellect and manly virtue that may dwell in the millions of her sons. She has set apart largely of her abundant resources for the promotion of this great end. And all that now remains is so to enlighten and elevate the spirit of her people, so to enlarge their ideas of what true Education for a great State is, of the offices it is to perform, the scope it should embrace, and the aids and appliances which it requires, as to carry forward, to full and symmetrical completion, the great design so well begun.

The State has acted wisely in laying the foundation of her System of Education in the elementary instruction of her children. She has begun at the beginning. She has established a school, and provided a teacher and a library, in every district and every neighborhood. She has thus provided for commencing the education of all the children within her limits; for giving to all who are to share the responsibilities and the labors of civil life, such instruction as shall fit them for the primary functions of citizenship, for those duties which must devolve on all alike. She has given them all the means of learning to read and to write. She has made it possible for them all to acquire those rudiments of knowledge needed in the ordinary transactions of society, those elementary facts and rules for which every day gives use. These are the necessities first felt, and felt most widely, in society and the state. Not the welfare only, but the very existence of our political society, exacts this provision for universal education. Intelligence is an essential part of public virtue; and all experience shows that the best educated communities are those best qualified to have control of their own affairs.

Out of this necessity for the common education of all, grows the concurrent necessity for schools of a higher grade,—for schools where instruction is carried beyond the elements of knowledge into its higher departments. It is obvious at the very outset, that for our common schools we must have teachers; and that teachers themselves must first be taught. The first step

in the improvement of our common Schools, must be in exacting higher qualities and a larger culture in those who teach them. And, from the nature of the case, the teacher must *know* more than he attempts to teach. His culture must have carried him farther than he can hope to carry his pupils. For education must be more than the simple communication of facts and processes that have been learned. It must be an *influence* as well as a tuition. It must elevate as well as instruct. And this demands the authority and weight of a superior culture. The teacher must have dwelt in a higher region: he must have passed through a sterner discipline, and filled his mind with the pervading spirit of advanced conquests in knowledge and in thought, before he can exert over other minds this up-raising and strengthening power.

I desire, therefore, Gentlemen, this day to insist that it is the duty of our great State, *to make just as full and complete provision for the education of her children in the higher departments of science and of general culture, as she has already made for their instruction in the elements of knowledge*; and I desire, furthermore, to impress upon you, who will have passed with more or less advantage through the discipline of these higher schools, that you can in no way render truer or better service to the State, than by raising the spirit of her people, which is her true and lawful sovereign, to the full conviction and prompt performance of this noble task.

A system of education, like a system of government,

implies congruity and harmony in all its parts. It is not complete, and therefore it is not a system at all, unless it provides fully for the attainment of the end for which it exists, by means adapted and adequate thereto. Now, the end and aim of education for any State, is the development of all the intellect and all the virtuous energy of its inhabitants. Any thing less than this falls short of what it is the interest and duty of the State to accomplish. And this great end can only be attained by such a gradation of instrumentalities, as shall provide for each successive stage in the general process. Elementary schools for elementary instruction; academies and seminaries for carrying still farther forward those whose faculties and tastes enable them thus to advance; colleges and universities for completing and perfecting the work thus begun:—these are the several gradations of a true System of Education, each one just as important as every other, and all essential to the general result, as root, trunk, and leaves are essential to development and fruition in vegetable life. And the same principle which makes it the duty of the State to take one under its care, places them all under its guardianship and commends them all to its support.

I am aware that this equal relationship of the several grades of education to a common system is sometimes denied, and that attempts are made to plant hostility between them, as if the one could flourish only by the detriment of the rest, or as if one had claims on public favor which the others could not urge. It is said that our lower schools alone, those in which only the rudiments

of knowledge are taught, have claims on the government as an interest of the State;—and this is urged upon the two-fold ground, (1) that the rudiments of knowledge are all that is needed to make *good citizens*, and (2) that while all the children of the State must have this instruction, the number is limited of those who can advance beyond it.

So far as the first objection is concerned, it belongs to a form of government and a state of society different from those which obtain here among us. Where citizens are merely subjects, where obedience to law decreed from a higher sphere is the test of civil virtue, and nothing beyond a prompt response to the exactions of government is looked for or desired, it may be that rudimentary knowledge, and the less of that the better, is alone required. But who shall affix limits to the qualifications of citizenship in such a State as this? Who, in a society complicated and artificial beyond all precedent, in these later ages of civility and of learning, in a community designed to be the very flower and consummation of all that have preceded it, and under institutions which commit to every member of the State a distinct sovereignty over its laws, its forms, and its fate,—who shall determine what degree of intellectual and of moral culture fulfills the high conditions of citizenship in such a State and in such an age as this? Undoubtedly a man may be a good citizen,—meaning thereby that he is not a bad one,—he may obey the laws, and he may perform without gross offense his share in making them, with but little of the knowledge and the discipline that schools confer. But who shall say,—who can for a mo-

ment believe, that he would not have been a *better* citizen—that he would not have brought more of intelligence and of virtue and of civil prudence to the service of the State, if his personal culture had been carried farther? And who has a right thus to stop his growth, and deny to the State the best possible service which the faculties of her sons can give? The humblest functions of citizenship in a free republic, involve duties and responsibilities which give scope and use for the highest culture and the largest knowledge. Every citizen has the power to vote, and by that vote to influence in all its forms and relations, and through all generations of men, the great body of law for a mighty empire. What degree of wisdom, what measure of knowledge, what extent of mental and of moral culture, can be too great for so high a trust? Who, as a citizen of such a State, is good enough, so long as it is possible to make him better? And in what can the State have a profounder or more direct concern, than in perfecting the individuals who make up the aggregate citizenship which thus shapes her character and controls her fate?

But it is further to be considered, that only a small part of the office of citizenship consists in the performance of specific acts. In a vigorous, free society, it is the general spirit and temper of the people—it is that pervading and diffusive influence which the general culture of a community never fails to create, that shapes its character and guides its growth. An educated community sends forth spontaneously an elevating and enlightening power which makes itself felt on all its

interests and in all the movements connected with them. It not only chooses better men for its agents and representatives, but it guides their action and elevates their aims; it holds them to duty against the temptations of selfishness and ambition; its applause is dearer, its censure is dreaded more, its judgment of conduct is sterner and more independent, for the culture and wisdom that mark its people. In all relations, at all times, for the discharge of all duties, the best MAN is the best CITIZEN. The qualities that characterize the one distinguish the other. The discipline that makes the one makes the other also; and so long as it is possible for one to become a better man, he can also become a better citizen. Until some one, therefore, shall fix the bounds at which it is desirable that the virtue and intelligence of a free State should stop, until it shall be determined just where the people of such a State become too wise and too virtuous for the task of governing themselves, it will not be easy to say at what point the education of her children ceases to be her paramount and supreme concern. The only education at all adequate to the necessities of such a State and such an age as ours, is the highest and best of which its people are capable. So long as noble faculties remain undeveloped, so long as capacities and energies exist which are useless for lack of culture, the State's great work of education is incomplete.

So far, then, as preparation for citizenship is concerned, the only limit that can be fixed to education is the capacity of the citizen to receive and profit by it.

And this view, if correct, disposes of the second objection against considering higher schools as belonging to a system of State education. Such schools must of necessity be limited in their direct agency to the comparatively small number of those qualified to profit by them; but this is a limit imposed by nature, and not by law, and the inequality it involves is one which the State cannot remove. The State needs and deserves the best service of the best faculties of her people. To refuse to employ them, and still more to refuse to aid in developing them where they do exist, because they do not exist in all alike, is as false in theory as it would be absurd in practice. The commonwealth does not create its citizens, nor is it responsible for inequality in their faculties or natural endowments. But it can provide that those endowments and faculties, whatever they may be in any case, and wherever they may exist, shall not be stifled—shall not be cheated of their due development, by accidents of circumstance and of position. She can bring the means and the agencies of such development within reach of those who cannot command them for themselves. And this it is her interest and her duty to do. All classes of her people, present and future generations, are alike concerned in thus augmenting to the utmost the aggregate of wisdom and virtue, by which the character and career of their common country is to be controlled.

There is another point in the operation and effect of common schools which is wholly overlooked by those who regard them as limiting the interest of the State in

a system of education. They are the touch-stones of talent, the tests of character and faculty, applied to the children of the State. Besides conveying to all some degree of knowledge, they detect, by an infallible chemistry, the germs of higher growth—faculties which require and will reward a nobler culture. They are like so many magnets passed, with watchful care, over the face of society, kept constantly and steadfastly applied to the myriad sands of its ocean shore, and drawing up the pure metal, which, wrought into proper forms, shall give strength and stability to the social fabric. Do men complain of inequality in mental endowments, and challenge the right of the State to recognize and avail itself of it? The Common School itself is compelled to recognize it. There is not a school district in the State where it is not displayed. The lowest and most elementary education detects and develops it. Go into any one of the twenty thousand of our common schools, and out of its twenty or thirty pupils you will find two or ten who, in mental faculties, in the readiness and eagerness with which they learn, surpass the rest. An extended and thorough culture will train them into men of thought and men of power. Shall it be denied *to them*, because it will not perform the same high office for every one of their companions? Must they be dwarfed and stunted in their growth, because all cannot match them in height or in strength of limb? Is it the true end and aim of State existence thus to crush all down to a common level, and that the level of the lowest? Or is it not rather among

the truest and the noblest functions of government to give free scope and all needed aid to whatever of energy and of lofty aspiring may have taken root upon her soil?

Upon the broadest grounds, therefore, of a common interest, may the duty of the State to provide for the higher departments of education, as well as the lower, be enforced. Indeed, it is a mistake to regard education, in its relation to citizenship, as having departments and divisions at all. It is simply a *process of growth*—a development, which may be more or less complete, but of which no stage is lower or higher than any other. When we come to professional education—to the training for service in specific walks of life, such distinctions may well enough be made. But the education needed to make, not the lawyer nor the engineer, but the citizen and the man, is simply that degree of culture of which his faculties are susceptible, and which will qualify him for the better discharge of his public duties: And to that degree, whatever it may be in any case, the State should bring education within the reach of all her children. Above all things should she take care that its doors are not closed upon any of them by poverty,—that none are shut out from its ample feast by lack of means to obtain admission; for it is only by such provision that she can offset the dangerous inequalities of wealth, by availing herself of the compensating inequalities of mental endowment, and secure for her service gifts and faculties that would otherwise be useless, and that might be turned against her.

Passing now from this general consideration of its utilities, there are special ends to be accomplished by a thorough scholastic culture, which assign it a place in our State System of Education.

We need it, in the first place, as a *qualification for office*. We need educated men, in the highest and best sense of the term, for our law-makers and our rulers, for those who stand in our high places of trust and of power, who guide the career and wield the authority of this great community. Thus far in our national progress, we have done well enough without them; or at all events, other necessities have been more urgent, and other influences have supplied their place. We have been felling forests upon the plain and the mountain side, and sweeping away denser and darker forests of still older growth, forests of prescription and tyranny, of falsehood and ignorance, from the face of civil society. We have been preparing a place whereon to build up the stately and majestic fabric of a great, free nation. We have been hewing in the wilderness and on the rock; and strength and courage were the qualities we have needed most. But we have done this work, and have done it well. We are approaching another and a higher stage of the great transaction. Except that we are not yet quite content with the size of our foundation, and feel constrained from time to time to pause a moment for the sake of enlarging still farther the area of our freedom, we are ready to proceed with the nobler and more difficult task of erecting thereon the structure of civil society, for which, now through two hundred

years, this continent has been preparing. The new duties exact new qualifications. The extempore statesmanship which has served us hitherto, will do no longer. The orator of the bar-room, whose brazen voice thundered defiance to tyrants with prodigious effect, now that tyrants have vanished is no longer needed in Congress or in Council. A conviction seems to be gaining slowly in the public mind, that the high and varied and delicate duties of diplomacy can not much longer be safely entrusted to men guiltless of civil or international law, and whose skill in dialectics has been wholly acquired in the mere pettifoggings of a county court. We are drawing near the time when the duties of government will task to the utmost the powers of the best instructed intellects of the nation; and it behooves us to be prepared for the emergency. In the early career of new States—of States especially founded, as these were, by men of intelligence and of principle—patriotism fulfills all the offices of statesmanship, and the commonwealth finds a guarantee for its safety in the virtue of its people and the necessities of their condition. So long as a struggle, either against foreign aggression or the rugged hostility of nature, is to be maintained, and while all the impulses of the national spirit are vigorous and fresh, integrity and courage alone may well preside over its affairs. But with us this stage is already past. We have now a national policy to establish, a national character to create. This is ever among the highest of human labors, fitted in any case to engage the loftiest of human faculties. It com-

prises, indeed, every thing that genius, and culture, and civic and social virtue can accomplish, for it embraces, as its result, all possible excellence—it is itself the aggregate of all that is just and good and truly noble in character and conduct. With all the aids that exist in older nations, where power is expressly confined to the wealthy and the intelligent orders of the state, and even where a single will imposes obedience to its behests, it is among the greatest of labors to build up a nation in true greatness and to a completed glory. But how are all these difficulties increased with us—increased even by the very virtues of our people and the felicities of our position! Our vast territory embraces all the varieties of soil, of surface, and of climate, each variety creating new interests, and all to be harmonized and developed by that common system which must embrace them all. We have a large population, increasing with unexampled rapidity—accessions coming to us from all quarters of the earth, and bringing with them the most widely different habits of conduct and an infinite diversity of character, all to take part in the guidance of public affairs, each one bringing his peculiar habits and experiences and sentiments, his prejudices and prepossessions, his hatreds, his likings, and his ambitions, to the common stock of the national spirit. For all these we have laws to make. All these we have to mold by those laws, by the influence of our public policy, and by the multiform agencies of educational discipline, into a compact, high-toned, patriotic people. Our domestic legislation thus becomes daily, with the increase of our

population and the growth of our power, more and more complex; while every year adds greatly to the delicate and difficult questions which grow out of our relation to foreign powers. Hitherto we have been able, in good degree, to avail ourselves of the comparative isolation of our position, and to hold ourselves aloof from the interests and conflicts of older nations. But this can not always be the case. The rapid increase of our power and national importance, gives us a prominent place among the nations of the earth, and will compel us, sooner or later, to throw *our* weight into the decision of every question of international concern. The tendency of events is towards what French writers have styled the *solidarité* of the interests and rights of the human race. No nation will be able long to regard any thing which concerns humanity, as wholly foreign to itself or beyond the sphere of its legitimate influence.

This advance of our country to larger duties and a wider sphere of national influence, creates new necessities and exacts higher qualities for public action. We need, year by year, better men in our public councils,—men of larger knowledge, of higher aims, and profounder views. Mere skill in the management of local affairs, knowledge of local sentiment and tact in satisfying the demands of local interest, will not meet the requirements of that broader and higher statesmanship which the time exacts. The demagogue of a neighborhood, cannot longer be the adequate arbiter of the nation's policy. That district will suffer loss—in the injury inflicted on the common country, as well as in its

own immediate reputation—which does not send to the national councils, as its agents, men competent to the duties of so high a trust, men instructed in public affairs, familiar with the whole field of public law and of public policy, and able to grasp the largest questions of government with thorough mastery ;—men of clear heads and firm hearts,—disciplined and fortified for the greatest duties of peace and war, whom no crisis can surprise, no difficulty embarrass, and no danger daunt.

Now, such qualifications do not come by nature. They are the ripened fruit of culture and of study. They demand a special training, and that training must be furnished by special schools,—by colleges, by universities, supplied with all the aids of mental culture, with libraries and apparatus and teachers—the written forms and the living guides. It is a pleasant fancy that all men are equally qualified for the duties of public life, and that republican equality implies the indiscriminate admission of all to equal functions. But it is one from which the wise man will make haste to emancipate his mind. We exact an apprenticeship,—years of labor, of practice, and of special study, before we trust another to make our coats or our shoes ; why should we expect an intuitive knowledge of higher affairs ? How shall a man understand all the manifold duties of statesmanship on easier terms than the simple processes of agriculture ? And why should you trust one with the management of your state affairs,—with deciding the great questions of peace and war,—with

the guardianship of character and honor and public faith,—with sovereignty over society and home and property and life, without the same special fitness for those great duties, which you would deem essential in the overseer of your farm or the executor of your estate? Public office, beyond all other forms of duty, and in this free country far more than in any other, demands the highest culture of the best faculties,—the most complete and thorough accomplishment in all knowledge, and in all mental and moral discipline. Government is at once a science and an art,—an art founded on science,—implying and requiring mastery of principles, thorough knowledge of facts and their analogies, the clearest sagacity in drawing deductions from them, and the nicest skill in applying them to public affairs. It is the largest, the most liberal, and the most difficult of studies. Whether you consider the magnitude of the interests it involves, the wide field over which its materials are scattered, the infinite variety of elements which enter into its method, or the high qualities of mind and of character which it exacts,—it stands paramount among the liberal arts in dignity and responsibility. There is no branch of learning that does not become tributary to it, no department of literature that does not strengthen or decorate its lofty labors. We have had men in our public councils in whom its dignity and glory found splendid illustration,—men on whose trained and instructed judgment the country reposed a trust, unfaltering and unbetrayed, and whose memory stimulates

just ambition and prompts to emulous effort. Many such still linger in our halls of legislation,—though our councils even now lack somewhat of elevation,—of that large and liberal culture which the emergencies of the times require. The public sense, I think, is already alive to the fact that the great body of our public men are not up to the requirements of their high duties; that we need in Congress, in our diplomacy, in executive departments, and in the subordinate but important posts of local control, men of greater knowledge, of more exact and complete discipline, of loftier views, and a more just conception of the dignity and grandeur of the functions devolved upon them; and this necessity is growing greater with every advancing step in our national progress. It will make itself felt more and more keenly every year; and it becomes a thoughtful and a provident State to be prepared in time to meet it.

Now, where shall this culture be afforded,—where and how shall men be thus fitted for the high offices of public life in a republican state, but in those schools where education is pushed to its widest limits, where accumulated and methodized knowledge can be conveyed, and where all the advantages of a regular systematic discipline can be enjoyed? And how can such schools and colleges, thus essential to State interests, be established and maintained but by State endowment? I know how this question is answered by the enemies of such endowments. Let those of the *wealthy*, they say, who desire such education for their children,

incur the expense of it. To this, so far as it goes, of course, there is no objection. But the question is not what individuals *desire*, but what the STATE *needs*, in the education of its children. It is not a question of private gratification nor of private interest, but of the public good. What, moreover, is to be done with those who desire it, but cannot afford it? What is to become on such a theory of the gifted children of the poor who outnumber ten to one the gifted children of the rich, and who are equally capable with them of becoming qualified for the highest places and the hardest tasks? Must the State lose all the advantage of their talents, because they cannot command the means essential to their proper culture? Must it dispense with their service,—repress their rising ambition, and deny to them all scope for development and improvement? Must it fill its high places with sons of the rich exclusively, put into their hands all the functions of government, and remand all but them to the lower ranks and inferior duties of life? What can be more hostile to the spirit of a Republican State than this? What can tend more directly and more powerfully to add to the intrinsic influence of wealth, that power and mastery which intellectual supremacy will always confer? And by what possible system of disabilities, by what hostile discriminations and exclusions, could a republic fasten a deeper brand and inflict harsher injury on its humbler members, than by thus making it impossible for them to qualify themselves for honorable and useful service on its behalf?

I am aware also that the utility of such Education has been denied; that the study of the ancient languages and literature especially, as a department of it, has been disparaged as of no practical service by way of preparation for public duty. I feel that in this presence, and before the general body of scholars everywhere—nay, I believe that with the great mass of intelligent and reflecting men in our society, whether liberally educated or not—time would be wasted in the refutation of this opinion. Of course, for purposes of practical service, these studies may be pushed to excess or inadequately and injudiciously pursued. They may not be duly diversified by studies of a different class; time may be unprofitably spent on their least essential features; and they may be made to minister to an empty and foolish ostentation, instead of a firm and substantial growth. Nor is it easy to point out the exact process by which even the proper pursuit of them ministers to intellectual progress and development, any more than it is to demonstrate the precise mode in which each species of food builds up and strengthens the physical frame. But all this does not, either in fact or in the general judgment, in the least invalidate the high utility of that regulated study of ancient literature, varied by the due intermixture of other studies, which the reasoned opinions of the wisest men in all ages, confirmed by the experience of a thousand years, has prescribed as best adapted to the harmonious and complete development of the mental faculties. It would be strange, indeed, if the study of the most per-

fect tongues the world has ever seen, the tongues in which all forms of written and of spoken thought have reached their highest development, the tongues in which Poetry, Eloquence, History, and Philosophy have attained their most perfect forms and achieved their most transcendent triumphs,—it would be strange if the time should ever come when the study of the structure and the literature of such languages should cease to contribute to mental growth, or be superseded by any thing less perfect, any thing less firmly established in the general approbation of successive generations. And it would be doubly strange if the political experiences and achievements of the great nations of antiquity,—experiences in which all forms of political existence and all theories of political perfection have had their completest trial and test,—should cease to have interest and profound instruction for men in public life, should cease to arm and embellish the American statesman especially for the high duties that devolve upon him.

For it is a great mistake to suppose that the utility of classical studies depends upon the knowledge acquired of the words and structure of the classic tongues, or even of the facts and sentiments therein recorded. It is from the companionship those studies imply—from the glorious company of lofty thoughts, heroic deeds, and noble characters which they make familiar to us—from the constant society of the gifted and the great which they compel us to cultivate, that their highest influence on character and conduct is to ema-

nate. How can the ardent and aspiring American youth make himself thus for years the close companion of the heroes and demi-gods who have illustrated the highest forms of humanity—how can he have pondered their words and their acts, moved under their eye, and breathed their air through the quick and susceptible years of his growing life, without having his soul lifted up into congenial heights, and his spirit filled with the power and the life that so ennobled them? For the scenes and acts and emotions of those early ages of the world are those which belong to no single age, but to the race of man. It is this fact—it is their perfect and complete production of sentiments and passions that are universal—that gives immortal youth to the great poets, orators, and historians of the ancient world. They touch our hearts, they compel our tears, they kindle within us all the noble passions of our nature, even as they did for those who first hung enraptured on their words, or rushed with eager joy to combat and the grave under the heroic rage they had enkindled. What companionship is fitter for the sons of our republic, what better society can they have, during their years of preparation for the high service of a free and aspiring State, than that of the men who thus raised genius and valor and all the forms of human virtue to the highest point they have ever reached, and filled the world with the splendor of their deeds and the resounding echo of their fame? For it is by the influence of such close and constant association that character is formed. We imitate insensibly what we admire, and

we admire most what long study and close companionship most commend to our judgment and our affections. Whatever, then, may be his future field, in whatever department of intellectual labor his after life may be spent, the American youth whose early steps have been judiciously guided through that land of great examples and of lofty lives, will find his spirit elevated and ennobled by its contagious grandeur; he will find that "its very air has enriched through life the blood of his thoughts,"—that he quits its soil and enters upon the nobler field where his labors are to be performed and his conquests to be achieved, in the eloquent language of a modern scholar, "with a front which the Greek has directed towards the stars, and a step which imperial Rome has disciplined to the march that carried her eagles round the world."

There is no need, gentlemen, to pursue this argument. We never need be solicitous lest classical studies, and the general discipline of the higher schools, should lack championship and vindication. They vindicate themselves, always and everywhere. In public council and in circles of private influence, in action and in speech, before select audiences and in the great assemblies of the people, the man of CULTURE will be the man of POWER.

All that I have said of education as essential to qualify men for the duties of public office, applies with equal force to all men, of all professions, who take any part, however humble, in public life; for whatever in life has any bearing upon the higher interests of society,

whatever connects itself in any way with the public good, or influences the opinions and conduct of the community, partakes of the nature of legislation, is to be classed among the moulding instrumentalities of the State, and as such deserves its protection and care. Every noble deed that may be done, every just and worthy word that may be spoken, makes its mark on the nation's life and contributes to the formation of the national spirit. Underlying, therefore, all the professions, giving elevation and dignity to every pursuit in any way connected with public affairs, is needed the culture and discipline which liberal studies confer. It is for the direct and paramount interest of the State, that all its professions and public walks should be filled by liberal-minded men; that its lawyers should be something more than adroit managers and successful pleaders; that its teachers should be filled with the spirit of their high profession; that the conductors of its public press should have higher aims and higher faculties, than simply to pander to popular passions and popular tastes; that all who minister in any way to the formation of public sentiment, should have been disciplined to loftier motives and to nobler views than belong to the mere routine of their pursuits. It is not simply the individual as a lawyer, a physician, a professional man of any sort, that needs this culture: for the attainment of his immediate personal ends, he may do without it. It is the STATE, that is to profit by his having it. It is the great mass of the community, that is made better and richer and stronger by that elevation of spirit and character to which he contributes.

Thus far, I have said nothing of the interests of learning and science, as having in themselves valid claims upon the care and support of the State; for I have sought to confine the argument to the most immediate and palpable utilities. But, even upon this ground, we cannot ignore those great interests, the springs and sources of all utility, always the greatest praise and glory of any people. For we cannot forget that whatever of greatness and of civility any nation has attained to, through successive ages of advancing civilization, has been reached by the aid of science, by the power and the discipline which sound learning confers. It is among the loftiest and the noblest aims, therefore, which any nation can propose to itself, to build up these great interests to the utmost, to give to them the largest scope and development, and to fill its people, of all ranks and through all classes, with its aspiring and liberal spirit. In this age especially, when Science has done so much for civilization, when the mightiest of its agencies and powers are those which science has revealed, it is of the highest importance that science should be cherished as the mighty mother of the modern world. We still need larger knowledge and more full possession of Nature's secrets. Our dominion over the forces of the universe, which have slumbered, in the darkness where they do their mighty work, since the fiat of the Almighty first gave them birth, is still but half established; and nothing but science can extend and perfect it. When we see, on every side, what scientific research has accomplished for society within the last half-century, when we reflect on the extent to which all existing

energy and progress are dependent on it, it seems impossible that we should be in any danger of forgetting its claims, or of postponing them to considerations of less importance.

We must not deceive ourselves as to the position of our country in regard to this subject. Great and renowned as have been our achievements in other fields, in learning and science we have still our laurels to win. In mechanism and the skillful adaptation of means to ends, we have already achieved an honorable fame. But we have as yet made few discoveries in the realms of science:—our most important inventions have grown out of principles discovered in foreign lands; and our men of highest culture and of greatest learning have drawn from foreign universities their guidance and instruction. This as yet gives no occasion for just reproach; for hitherto more pressing necessities have prevented us from turning our thoughts in this direction. But the years are rolling on; our national frame is becoming knit and strong; our material interests have been secured; and it is time we began to look earnestly and carefully after the higher concerns on which our glory and renown must at last depend. For there is nothing lasting in a nation's greatness but its conquests in the realms of intellect, its achievements in the domains of science, its contributions to the noble, the lofty, the heroic, and the immortal. What is it that gathers around Athens the homage of all generations, and will make that name the synonym of all that is greatest and best in national renown, to the latest syllable of recorded

time? Not its wealth, nor its power, nor even the valor of its sons on the field of war; for all of these, but their undying fame, has passed away forever. It is the genius and lofty culture of her sons. It is the splendid productions of letters and of art, the perfect models of excellence in character and conduct, the bright examples of valor and of virtue, she has bequeathed the world. These—these are the priceless treasures which make up a nation's glory. These are the everlasting possessions which time can not tarnish, over which oblivion herself has no power.

I have thus presented some of the more obvious considerations which, in my judgment, impose upon our rich and noble State the duty of completing her State System of Education, by extending it to the higher departments of mental culture,—by adding academies, colleges, and universities to her common schools, and by offering to every child within her limits the full and free advantage of the best discipline and training which they confer. The limits of such an address compel me to pass unnoticed various minor objections which might be urged against such an extension of the functions of the State, and the many difficulties which seem to threaten the practical operation of such a system. Nor do I enter into any inquiry as to the specific measures by which it should be carried out; for these belong rather to the men into whose hands the task of State legislation may be entrusted, than to such an audience as this occasion

brings together. But I cannot believe that any difficulties exist which a wise and prudent statesmanship cannot remove, nor that the objections to such State action, are at all to be compared with the high utilities which commend it to the general favor of all her people.

Nor can I close without a word of apology for having thus forced on your attention, Gentlemen of the Literary Societies, arguments and considerations which seem more appropriate to legislative halls than to this literary and festal commemoration. But in our free society, and under our republican forms, wherever activity of thought prevails there the process of legislation is going on, there spring up those influences which give direction to public sentiment, which elevate popular aspirations, and which finally condense the general opinion and reason of the community into the forms of law. Where, then, more properly than here, before Societies whose special object is to adapt to practical service the solid culture of college studies, in presence of those upon whom will soon devolve in large degree the labors and responsibilities of public life, can the claims of Education be urged? I cannot help feeling that in coming here with such claims, on behalf of the high and thorough culture which the State requires, we come where they will meet the promptest recognition, and at the same time enlist the most earnest and effective championship. The youth of our State stand nobly distinguished for liberality of sentiment, for vigor of intel-

lect, and for energy in action. The raw material for great characters and for useful public service, lies profusely scattered over its fertile hills and plains. I see an eventful and a stirring age dawning on our State, and preparing still higher duties and responsibilities for us and the generations that come after us. We have planted on this soil the germs of the noblest civilization the world has seen. We have achieved the conquest of commerce and the mechanic arts. Whatever energy, enterprise, and industry can accomplish, in adding wealth and power and large command to a nation's inheritance, we may look upon as already ours. But a larger empire invites and awaits us. A higher ambition beckons us to new fields, brighter than the vision which enticed Columbus to this western world, holier than the dreams which stirred Christian Europe to the rescue of the tomb where Christ the Redeemer of old reposed. Realms of thought solicit our invasion. A great and mighty people, rich in spirit, lofty in aspiring, which deems nothing that human genius can effect beyond its reach, awaits the guidance and counsel that lead states to the heights of great renown. Be it your task, young men, and that of others whom kindred societies are training for a kindred sphere, to lead the van in this new crusade. More grand is this domain, loftier and nobler are victories won in such a war, than all that martial ardor has ever laid at the conqueror's feet. Wherever, then, your paths in life may lead, whether it be yours to make the laws, or train the men, or create the public sentiment for

our noble State, cherish for her evermore that high ambition which links intellectual culture with civil freedom; infuse into her sovereign opinion the love of what is excellent and noble, and scorn for all that is narrow and ignorant and base; secure for her that sublime alliance between material and intellectual power which gives stability to growth and makes progress safe; and fasten her affections and her supreme endeavors on those great interests which elevate humanity and set upon nations, as upon individuals, the seal of immortality.



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